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A peddler calling on an old lady to dispose of some goods acquired of her if she could tell him of any road on which no peddler had traveled. "Yes," replied she, "I know of one, and that's the road to heaven."

THE EARLY BIRD.

Daintily over the dew-wet grass, tripping blue-eyed Milly, the farmer's lass, swinging her milk-pail and from her apron a love-song, soft and low. "She never will turn a thought to me!" From the quiver of the herdsman's lad; But she smiled on all with a merry glance And gave each word an equal chance.

Now faithful Donald, the herdsman's lad, The more he loved her the more was sad; "For what with the quiver's son," thought he, "She never will turn a thought to me!" But down in the quiver's son to the herdsman's lad, When Milly went singing along that way, He watched her pass, and she cried, in jest: "Tis the early bird—you know the rest!"

Then suddenly Donald grew so bold, That the "old" old story was quickly told; And blue-eyed Milly was nothing loth, On that summer's morn'g to plight her troth.

"Oh! foolish Donald!" she cried, in gloom, "To wait so long for a hint from me!" Then merely over the dew-wet grass, Tripping Donald and Milly, his own sweet lass.

THE BOARD FENCE.

"Shoo, shoo, get home, you plaguy critters!" cried Mr. Babcock, waving his arms as he chased a dozen sheep and lambs through a gap in the fence. It was a wooden fence, and when he had succeeded in driving the animals the other side of it, he lifted it from its reclining position, and propped it up with stakes. This was an operation he had found himself obliged to repeat many times in the course of the season, and not only of that season, but of several previous seasons.

Yet Mr. Babcock was neither slack nor thrifty; in fact, he rather prided himself on the orderly appearance of his farm, and not without reason. How then shall we account for his negligence in this particular instance?

The truth was that this fence formed the boundary line between his estate and that of Mr. Small; and three generations of men who owned these estates had been unable to decide to whom it belonged to rebuild and keep it in repair. If it was the property of Mr. Small, and he was a peaceable disposition, they had compromised the matter and avoided a quarrel; but if, on the contrary, they belonged to that much larger class who would sooner sacrifice their own comfort and convenience than their so-called rights, this fence had been a source of unending bickerings and strife.

And of this class were the present owners. Again and again they had consulted their respective lawyers on the subject, and dragged from their hiding-places musty old deeds and records, but always with the same result. "I say it belongs to you to keep it in repair; that's as plain as a pike staff," Mr. Babcock would say.

"And I say it belongs to you,—any fool might see that," Mr. Small would reply, and then high words would follow, and they would part in anger, more determined and obstinate than before. The lawyer's fees and the loss by damages from each other's cattle had already amounted to a sum sufficient to have built a fence round their entire estates, but what was that compared to the satisfaction of having their own way?

There was not wanting in the neighborhood peace-makers who would gladly have settled the affair by arbitration; but to this neither of the belligerents would listen for a moment.

At last, one day, Miss Letitia Gill, a woman much respected in the village, and of some weight as a land-owner and taxpayer, sent for Mr. Babcock to come and see her on business; a summons which he had haste to obey, as how could he do otherwise where a lady was concerned.

Miss Letitia sat at her window sewing up a seam, but she dropped her work and took off her spectacles when Mr. Babcock made his appearance. "So you got my message; thank you for coming, I'm sure. Sit down, do. I suppose my man Isaac told you I wanted to consult you on a matter of business,—a matter of equity, I may say. It can't be expected that we women folks should be the best judges about such things, you know; there's Isaac, to be sure, but then he lives on the place, and maybe he wouldn't be exactly impartial in his judgment about our affairs."

"Yes, so," said Mr. Babcock. "Well, the state of the case is this: When Isaac came up from the long meadow to dinner, my're mowing the meadow to-day, and an uncommonly good yield there is,—when he came up to dinner, he found that certain stray cows had broken into the vegetable garden."

"He did, hey?" "You can fancy the riot they made, I declare, Isaac was almost ready to use profane language. I'm not sure that he didn't say 'dam,' and I'm not certain he didn't feel to reproach him severely for the pains he has taken with that garden is something amazing; working in it, Mr. Babcock, early and late, weeding and digging, and watering, and now to see it all torn and trampled so that you wouldn't know which was weeds and which was cucumbers, it's enough to rouse anybody's temper."

"It is so," said Mr. Babcock. "And that isn't all, for by the looks of things they must have been rampaging a full hour in the orchard and clover-field before they had got into the garden. Just you come and see; and putting on her sun-bonnet, Miss Letitia showed Mr. Babcock over the damaged precincts."

"You don't happen to know those animals that did the mischief?" said Mr. Babcock. "Well, I didn't observe them in particular, but Isaac said there was one with a particular white mark; something like a cross on her haunch."

"Why, that's Small's old Brindle," cried Mr. Babcock. "I know the mark, as well as I know the nose on my face. She had balls on her horns, didn't she?"

"Yes, so Isaac said."

"And a kind of hump on her back?" "A perfect dromedary," said Miss Letitia. "I noticed that myself."

"They were Small's cows,—no doubt about it at all," said Mr. Babcock, rubbing his hands. "No sheep with them; hey?"

"Well, now I think of it, there were sheep—they run away as soon as they see Isaac. Yes, certain cows were sheep," said Miss Letitia. "Now it's now it,—they always go with the cows; and what you wish of me—"

"To fix the damages," said Miss Letitia. "As I said before, women folks are no judges about such matters."

Mr. Babcock meditated a moment, and then said: "Well, I wouldn't take a cent less than seventy-five dollars, if I were you,—not a cent."

"Seventy-five dollars! Isn't that a good deal, Mr. Babcock? You know I don't wish to be hard on the poor man; all I want is a fair compensation for the mischief done."

"Seventy-five dollars a pair, ma'am,—in fact, I may say it's low; I wouldn't have a herd of cattle and sheep tramping through my premises in that way for a hundred."

"There's one thing I forgot to state,—the orchard gate was open or they couldn't have got in; that may make a difference."

"Not a bit,—not a bit. You'd a right to have your gate open, but Small's cows had no right to run loose. I hope Isaac drove 'em all to the pound, didn't he?"

"I heard him say he'd shut 'em up somewhere, and didn't mean to let 'em out till the owner calls for 'em. But, Mr. Babcock, what if he should refuse to pay the damages? I should hate to go to law about it."

"He won't refuse; if he does, keep the critters till he will pay. As to law, I guess he's had about enough of that."

"I'm sure I thank you for your advice," said Miss Letitia, "and I mean to act upon it to the very letter."

And Mr. Babcock took his leave with a very happy expression of contentment. Scarcely was he out of sight when Miss Letitia sent a summons for Mr. Small, which he obeyed as promptly as his neighbor had done.

She made him precisely the same statement she had made to Mr. Babcock, showed him the injured property, and asked him to fix damages.

It was remarkable that before he did this, he should ask the same question Mr. Babcock had asked, namely, whether she had any suspicion to whom the animals belonged.

"Well, one of them I observed had a terribly crooked horn."

"Precisely—it's Babcock's heifer," I should know her among a thousand. She was black and white, wasn't she?"

"Well, now I think of it, she was a seldom seen so clear a black and white as a cow."

"To be sure, they're Babcock's animals fast enough. Well, let me see—what you want is just about a fair estimate, I suppose?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I should say ninety dollars, as low as he ought to be allowed to get off with."

"O, but I fear that will seem as if I meant to take advantage. Suppose we call it—say seventy-five?"

"Just as you please, of course; but hanged if I'd let him off for less than a hundred, if 'twas my case."

"And if he refuses to pay?" "Why, keep his animals till he comes round, that's all."

"But there's one thing I neglected to mention: our gate was standing open; that may alter the case."

"Not at all,—there's no law against your keeping your gate open; there is against stray animals."

"Very well,—thank you for your advice," said Miss Letitia; and Mr. Small departed with as smiling a countenance as Mr. Babcock had worn.

It was at this time that night he made a strange discovery—old Brindle was missing!

At about the same hour Mr. Babcock made a similar discovery—the black and white heifer was nowhere to be found!

A horrible suspicion seized them both,—a suspicion which they would not have made known to each other for the world.

They waited till it was dark, and then Mr. Babcock stole round to Miss Letitia's, and meekly asked leave to look at the animals which had committed the trespass. He would have done it without asking leave, only that thirty Miss Letitia always locked her barn doors at night.

While he stood looking over into the pen where the cows were confined, and trying to negotiate with Miss Letitia for the release of the heifer, along came Mr. Small, in quest of Brindle. The two men stared at each other for an instant in blank dismay, and then hung their heads in confusion.

It was useless to assert that the damages were too high, for had they not fixed them themselves? It was useless to plead that Miss Letitia was in a manner responsible for what had happened, on account of the open gate, for had they not assured her that circumstance did not affect the case? It was useless to say that she had no right to keep the cows in custody, for had they not conspired to do so? As to going to law about it, would they not then become the sport of the whole town?

"He that digreth a pit, he himself shall fall into it," said Miss Letitia, who read what was passing in their minds as well as if they had spoken, or the light of Isaac's lantern fell full on their faces. "However, I don't wish to be hard upon you, and on one condition I will free the cows and forgive you the debt."

"What is that?" Both looked the question, but did not ask it.

"The condition is that you promise to put a good new fence in place of the old one that separates your estates, dividing the costs between you, and that henceforth you will live peaceably together as far as in you lies. Do you promise?"

"Yes," muttered both, in a voice scarcely audible.

"Shake hands upon it, then," said Miss Letitia.

Mules and Women.

Some unknown party writes me as follows:

"Mr. M. I would advise me in your next column what to do with a mule-mul—Shell I pound him or not?"

"My wife is also treacherous as the mule I believe her tongue is hung on the middle and flies at both ends."

"L. P."

No, sir, don't pound your mule. I know it is customary for owners of mules to commence on the animal at sunrise with a crowbar and pound him until bedtime, but I have always found kindness more successful. Seek to gain the friendship of your mule, and as soon as you succeed you can do anything with him. When you go into the barn in the morning, have a kind word for him, instead of knocking him down with the neck-yoke. Ask after the health of his family—show him that you are interested in his welfare—be civil and yet dignified, and as soon as that mule flinches out that some one in this cold world loves him he will be a different mule.

All mules kick, my dear sir, just as all men love to hold a fat belly, but there's a remedy for it. Get an old stove boiler, fill it with bricks, and hang it by a rope so that it will just swing against the animal's heels. Every time he kicks it will fly back, like the pendulum of a clock, and the patience of the most enduring mule will, in time, wear out. I tried this once, and the mule kicked me twenty-four days and nights before he surrendered, but after that you might run a steamboat on his heels, and he wouldn't raise a hoof.

Feed your mule well. I know of farmers who throw a keg of nails or an old saw-pan into the manger, and expect a mule to grow fat on such forage, but it embitters his feelings and makes 'em more set in their ways. Of course I don't say that you must feed a mule on fried eggs, currant jelly, raisin cake, and the like of that, but don't expect he can fatten on rails and feel enthusiastic all the time.

About your wife. Don't try to stop her from talking unless you want to kill her. It's natural for a woman to talk, sir. My first wife used to nearly kill me, but I now remember with strict grief how I deliberately planned her death. I be sure that she couldn't keep right on talking for three weeks, and she commenced. I had to go away from home, but she was a woman that wouldn't lie, and I trusted to her honor. I returned home at the end of three weeks. There was no one around the house, but on a chair where I left my dear wife sitting, was a corset, a dress, a dozen buttons, and a back-comb—the last relic of my loving partner. She had talked herself to death, and as I began to weep the corset spoke up and said:

"Come down with that little ten dollars, if you please." M. QUADE.

A Popular Comet.

The World has received information that the comet is very popular among young lovers, and they never tire of the heavenly hunt, but endure with astounded resignation the constantly recurring collisions consequent upon the sudden movements of their heads in opposite directions. Now and then the young fellow is sure he sees it, and then in the excitement of the moment he passes his arm about his companion's neck, and with his hand under her chin raises her face toward that of the starry firmament where he thinks he has discovered the celestial wanderer. Full of enthusiasm the girl remains gazing in this position long and earnestly, the silver moonlight illuminating her countenance with a radiance that gives to every feature an angelic charm, and suggesting the idea that she herself might be a beautiful star, moulded into human form and sent upon the earth for the delectation of mankind. But at this interesting point of the search the voice of a sleepy and unromantic father penetrates the shadows of the garden—"Ja-a-a-a! it is ten o'clock," and the charm is broken.

The Bamboo Tree.

Probably this tree subserves more purposes of usefulness than any other in the whole range of nature. The Indian obtains from it a part of his food, many of his household utensils, and a wood at once lighter and capable of bearing greater strains than heavier timber of the same size. Besides, in expeditions in the tropics under the rays of a vertical sun, bamboo trunks prove more than once been used as barrels, in which water much purer than could be preserved in vessels of any other kind, is fresh for the crew. On the western coast of Southern Asia, the bamboo furnishes all the materials for the construction of houses, at once pleasant, substantial and preferable to stone, which the frequently recurring earthquakes bring down upon the heads of the dwellers. The fact that the bamboo is hollow has made it eminently useful for a variety of purposes—it serves as a measure for liquids, and is fitted with a lid and a bottom, trunks and barrels are quite frequently made of it. Even small boats very often are made of the largest trunks, by strengthening them with strips of other wood where needed. In one way they obtain the height of several feet, and with the aid of a microscope their development can be easily watched. But the most remarkable feature about the bamboo is their blossoming. With all this rapidity of growth they bloom only twice in a century, the flower appearing at the end of fifty years. Like other grasses, they die after having borne seed. The highest of the bamboo is the Sammot. In tracts where it grows in the greatest perfection, it sometimes rises to the height of one hundred feet, with a stem only eighteen inches in diameter at the base. The wood itself is only an inch in thickness.

The Cradle of our Fashions.

The word "miller" is derived from the name of "Milan." Millinery for some centuries was synonymous with fine dress goods of Milan manufacture. It is still the most fashionable city in Italy, and is the center of its silk business. From 1565 till 1859, Milan and Lombardy were ruled over and plundered, first by the Spaniards, next by the Austrians, then for a time by the

FACTS AND FANCIES.

A sensitive girl has broken off the match because he said she had a foot like a rain box.

A Boston man boldly declares that if he couldn't get out of Philadelphia any other way he would cheerfully crawl into a mortar and be shot out of it.

"I wonder if it's sea-sickness that makes sailors always a heaving up anchors!" exclaimed Aunt Hepzibah, as she looked thoughtfully up from her morning paper.

A little boy of our acquaintance a few days ago, after attentively watching a couple of industriously inclined bugs, remarked that even the bugs had got to playing marbles.

"Now, Sammy, tell me, have you read the story of Joseph?" "Oh, yes, uncle." "Well, then, what wrong did they do when they sold their brother?" "They sold him too cheap, I think."

Out of one hundred and eighty-two boys in the Connecticut reform school, the superintendent reports that one hundred and eighty are liars. The proposal now is to educate the entire lot of 'em for the profession of the law.

It will render your daily routine of life more balmy to be made aware of the fact that hydrophobia can be communicated by a dog that is not mad, and that the disease may suddenly start from a bite twenty years old.

An elderly clergyman of Chicago, when asked the other day why he had never married, replied that he had spent his lifetime in looking for a woman who would refrain from working him a pair of slippers, and he had never found her.

A Brooklyn young woman, who abandoned her old husband, says: "He was too soft. I couldn't be hugging and kissing him all the while—it isn't my disposition. I couldn't bear to be obliged to sit on his lap and cuddle him every time I wanted a cent."

Walt Whitman's ode to the St. Louis bridge: Lo! a bridge at St. Louis! Stretched from the lungs of multiplied beer legs.

Already overpassed by feet that could not be excelled in Chicago (which he was an elephant).

Staggered with the multitudinous expectations of the wharves and wharves. For it stringed serpent heads myriads. And lightning girded monstrosities of all kinds.

Down through the anti-spasmodic whirl of cataplexies. Dismalizing, bamboozling all, even the Hereafter.

In an unmitigated extension of the culmination of Chinaman.

A person wants to be careful, of course, but where in the crown of one's hat can one find room for a slip containing directions for the treatment of a drowning man, a compendium of rules for avoiding hydrophobia, a string of remedies for sunstroke, and one's fire-alarm card? Nobody but a paper hanger could do the job well.

An Illinois paper says: "Mr. A. W. Shelton came into this office the other day with one side of his face badly swollen and one eye greatly inflamed, caused, as he says, by the poison of a potato bug. He struck a bug with the bald end of his hair brush, and some of the 'juice' struck his face near his eyelid. Two physicians attending him consider the bug much more powerful as a blistering agent than Spanish flies."

A Burlington, Iowa, board of trade man got into trouble by letting his business weigh too heavily on his mind the other night. His wife heard him murmur in his sleep, "Ella, dear Ella," fondly and tenderly, and as her name is Melchior, she woke him with the bald end of his hair brush, and asked him, "Who?" "I was thinking of Ella Vator," the wretched man said calmly, and chuckled off to sleep again.

A young man, who had spent a little of his own time and a great deal of his father's money in fitting for the bar, was asked, after his examination, how he got along. "Oh, well enough," said he; "I answered one question right."

"Ah, indeed?" said the old gentleman, with looks of paternal snootiness; "and what was it?" "They asked me what a *qui tam* action was."

"That was a hard one, and you answered it correctly, did you?" "Yes; I told them I did not know."

On a cruise the sailors saw a comet and were somewhat surprised and alarmed at its appearance. The hands met and appointed a committee to wait on the commander and ask his opinion of it. They approached him and said: "We want to ask your opinion, your honor." "Well, my boys, what is it about?" "We want to inquire about that thing up there." "Now, before I answer you, first let me know what you think it is." "Well, your honor, we have talked it all over, and we think it is a star sprung a leak."

London's Poverty.

A London correspondent of the Cincinnati Enquirer says: "Every day I meet the most pitiable looking objects, imploring charity only by their looks, for they dare not reach forth a hand. Beggings seems to be a poor investment here. They don't get rich and retire like they do in America. I never saw such squalor and wretchedness in my lifetime in America as I can see in London streets in one day. I don't like the extremes here. Here the papers are howling because the government does not expend money in buying paintings for the national art gallery, while under the very shadows of that magnificent edifice people are writhing in poverty. Another thing that strikes me are the innumerable charitable institutions I see on every hand, all supported by private charity. They have asylums for cripples, blind, the aged and the orphaned. But there is no charity in English law like there is in the Ohio statutes. These people are cared for here only when they cannot care for themselves, and often not then; while the broad humanity of our law gathers the young under shelter,—not merely to shelter, but to educate and nurture into manhood and womanhood and useful citizenship. The subjects of English charity go from the asylums to the graveyards, while they in our country go from this kindly shelter into healthy and useful life, and repay an hundred-fold the money expended for their comfort by the state."

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